

VZCZCXYZ0000  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMO #1607 1571454  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 051454Z JUN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8438  
INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 001607

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2018  
TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: DUMA RESOLUTION CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM BIG  
TREATY

REF: MOSCOW 1517

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Alice G. Wells for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: On June 4, the State Duma adopted a nonbinding resolution calling for the GOR to withdraw from the "Big Treaty" with Ukraine, should a NATO MAP be extended to the GOU. Prior to the vote, FM Lavrov said Ukraine's NATO accession would represent a "colossal geopolitical shift" that would threaten Russia's interests. The vote was timed to exert maximum pressure: just prior to a Medvedev-Yushchenko meeting in St. Petersburg and joint military maneuvers involving U.S., Ukrainian, and some NATO militaries. Russian experts have speculated that withdrawing from the Big Treaty would give the GOR the right to challenge Ukraine's sovereignty over Sevastopol. End Summary.

-----  
The Vote  
-----

12. (U) In yet another chapter in the ongoing dispute over Ukraine's NATO aspirations, on June 4 the State Duma voted 408-5 in favor of adopting a nonbinding resolution calling for Russia's withdrawal from the 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership ("Big Treaty") if Ukraine is offered NATO MAP or "takes other steps" to speed up NATO accession. Prior to the vote, FM Lavrov told the Duma that every country has the right to pursue its own foreign policy, but "the acceptance into NATO of Ukraine and Georgia will mean a colossal geopolitical shift and we assess such steps from the point of view of our interests." The vote came just days before Medvedev is to meet Yushchenko in St. Petersburg on the margins of the International Economic Forum, and one week before Ukraine is to participate in joint military maneuvers in Crimea with the U.S. and other NATO countries beginning June 12. (Note: These are not NATO exercises.)

-----  
Moscow Applies Pressure  
-----

13. (C) The experts told us the Duma vote is another instance of the GOR using the body to issue tough resolutions regarding disputes with foreign countries. According to Deputy Director of the Moscow-based CIS Institute Vladimir Zhurikhin, it was important for Russia to send a message to Yushchenko that it does not approve of the GOU's plans to join NATO. The GOR, he said, wanted to take an aggressive posture when Medvedev meets with Yushchenko. The tactic may be working, he argued, as the Ukrainian Rada has delayed a vote that would allow foreign troops on its soil ahead of the upcoming joint military maneuvers. Allowing NATO troops in Crimea at such a sensitive time would greatly upset the GOR,

he said.

-----  
Possible Consequences  
-----

¶4. (C) Some experts speculate that withdrawing from the Big Treaty could open the door for Russia to mount a legal challenge to Ukraine's sovereignty over Sevastopol. Under the Big Treaty, the GOR recognized Sevastopol as part of Ukraine (reftel). Zharikhin (as well as some GOR officials) argued, however, that Ukraine's decision to join NATO would violate Article 6 of the Treaty, which stipulated that neither party will take any action or join any organization that threatens the security of the other. If Ukraine violated the Treaty by joining NATO, then Russia could possibly lay claim to Sevastopol, he argued.

-----  
Comment  
-----

¶5. (C) The GOR has consistently used the Duma to raise the temperature of Russian-Georgian relations, particularly with respect to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. As Ukraine's aspirations for NATO have achieved a higher profile, the GOR has begun to devoted greater political resources to suggesting th